

What is Claimed:

1                   1.     A method of determining a phase between a first signal  
2     and a second signal, the first signal and the second signal corresponding to  
3     signal transmissions between a first device and a second device, the second  
4     device periodically moving along a translational axis with respect to the first  
5     device in a first direction or a second direction, the method comprising the  
6     steps of:

7                         assigning a positive or negative value to each of a plurality of  
8     positive and negative zero crossings of the first signal, a positive zero  
9     crossing being assigned a positive value if the second signal is negative or a  
10    negative value if the second signal is positive, and a negative zero crossing  
11    being assigned a positive value if the second signal is positive or a negative  
12    value if the second signal is negative;

13                        counting a numerator for a predetermined interval, the  
14    numerator being counted in a positive direction if the second device is moving  
15    in the first direction and the value assigned to a corresponding zero crossing  
16    of the first signal is negative or if the second device is moving in the second  
17    direction and the value assigned to the corresponding zero crossing is  
18    positive, the numerator being counted in a negative direction if the second  
19    device is moving in the first direction and the value assigned to the  
20    corresponding zero crossing is positive or if the second device is moving in  
21    the second direction and the value assigned to the corresponding zero  
22    crossing is negative;

23                        counting a denominator for the predetermined interval, the  
24    denominator being counted in a positive direction; and

25                        calculating a raw phase between the first signal and the second  
26    signal by dividing a value of the numerator by a corresponding value of the  
27    denominator after the predetermined interval.

1                   2.     The method of claim 1 wherein said calculating step  
2 includes calculating a raw phase between the first signal and the second  
3 signal by dividing the value of the numerator by the value of the denominator  
4 at each positive crossing of the first signal.

1                   3.     The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:  
  
2                   detecting a polarity of each crossing of the first signal during the  
3 predetermined interval.

1                   4.     The method of claim 1 wherein said counting a numerator  
2 step includes counting the numerator when either, but not both, of the first  
3 signal and the second signal has a positive value.

1                   5.     The method of claim 1 wherein the predetermined interval  
2 corresponds to an interval between positive zero crossings of the first signal.

1                   6.     The method of claim 1 wherein the translational motion of  
2 the second device with respect to the first device causes the phase between  
3 the first signal and the second signal to periodically alternate.

1                   7.     The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:  
  
2                   providing a signal for correcting for relative rotational motion  
3 between the first and second devices using the calculated raw phase or a  
4 calculated unwrapped phase, the unwrapped phase being related to the  
5 calculated raw phase.

1                   8.     The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:  
  
2                   converting a first and a second analog signal to the first and  
3 second signals respectively, the first and second signals being digital signals.

1                   9.     The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

2                   resetting the numerator and the denominator after the  
3     predetermined interval.

1                   10.    The method of claim 1 wherein said calculating step  
2     includes repeatedly calculating the raw phase for each of a successive  
3     plurality of the predetermined interval.

1                   11.    The method of claim 10 wherein  $\pm 360^\circ k$  are added to the  
2     calculated raw phase if a difference between the raw phase calculated at  
3     successive predetermined intervals exceeds a predetermined value.

1                   12.    A digital phase detector for determining a phase between  
2     a first signal and a second signal, the first signal and the second signal  
3     corresponding to signal transmissions between a first device and a second  
4     device, the second device periodically moving along a translational axis with  
5     respect to the first device in a first direction or a second direction, said digital  
6     phase detector comprising:

7                   a polarity determiner for assigning a positive or negative value  
8     to each of a plurality of positive and negative zero crossings of the first  
9     signal, said polarity determiner assigning a positive zero crossing a positive  
10    value if the second signal is negative or a negative value if the second signal  
11    is positive, said polarity determiner assigning a negative zero crossing a  
12    positive value if the second signal is positive or a negative value if the second  
13    signal is negative;

14                  a numerator counter for counting for a predetermined interval,  
15    the numerator counter counting in a positive direction if the second device is  
16    moving in the first direction and the value assigned to a corresponding zero  
17    crossing of the first signal is negative or if the second device is moving in the  
18    second direction and the value assigned to the corresponding zero crossing is  
19    positive, the numerator counter counting in a negative direction if the second  
20    device is moving in the first direction and the value assigned to the

21 corresponding zero crossing is positive or if the second device is moving in  
22 the second direction and the value assigned to the corresponding zero  
23 crossing is negative;

24 a denominator counter for counting in a positive direction for the  
25 predetermined interval; and

26 a raw phase calculator for calculating a raw phase between the  
27 first signal and the second signal by dividing a value of the numerator counter  
28 by a corresponding value of the denominator counter after the predetermined  
29 interval.

1 13. The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein said raw  
2 phase calculator calculates the raw phase between the first signal and the  
3 second signal by dividing the value of the numerator counter by the value of  
4 the denominator counter at each positive crossing of the first signal.

1 14. The digital phase detector of claim 12 additionally  
2 comprising:

3 a zero crossing detector for detecting zero crossings of the first  
4 signal during the predetermined interval.

1 15. The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein said  
2 numerator counter operates when either, but not both, of the first signal and  
3 the second signal has a positive value.

1 16. The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein the  
2 predetermined interval corresponds to an interval between positive zero  
3 crossings of the first signal.

1 17. The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein the  
2 translational motion of the second device with respect to the first device  
3 causes the phase between the first signal and the second signal to  
4 periodically alternate.

1                   18.    The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein said raw  
2    phase value calculated by said raw phase calculator, or an unwrapped phase  
3    value calculated based on said raw phase value, is used to provide a signal  
4    for correcting for relative rotational motion between the first and second  
5    devices.

1                   19.    The digital phase detector of claim 12 additionally  
2    comprising:

3                   a converter for converting a first and a second analog signal to  
4    the first and second signals respectively, the first and second signals being  
5    digital signals.

1                   20.    The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein said  
2    numerator counter and said denominator counter are reset after the  
3    predetermined interval.

1                   21.    The digital phase detector of claim 12 wherein said raw  
2    phase calculator repeatedly calculates the raw phase for each of a successive  
3    plurality of the predetermined interval.

1                   22.    The digital phase detector of claim 21 additionally  
2    comprising:

3                   a second raw phase calculator for adding  $\pm 360^\circ k$  to the  
4    calculated raw phase if a difference between the raw phase calculated at  
5    successive predetermined intervals exceeds a predetermined value.